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SUMMARY OF SITE ACTIVITIES TO DATE AT THE WESTBANK ASBESTOS SITE

December 1995

- LDEQ and START conducted a recon of the Westbank Asbestos (WBA) site and determined that the condition of the asbestos-containing material (ACM) has deteriorated since the last site visits in 1990

- EPA, LDEQ, and START begin to plan strategies for the Phase I removal assessment

February 7 through March 1, 1996

- START and LDEQ conduct the phase I removal assessment which included performing a visual extent of ACM contamination survey and estimating waste volumes

- 605 sites of suspect ACM had been identified by March 1, 1996, suspect ACM included a light, bluish-grey, cementitious-like material and a black, asphaltic, shingle-like material

March 29, 1996

- START conducted an *in situ* density tests a three selected ACM location of the grey material and the results revealed an average density of 1.35 cubic yards per ton

April 15 through April 18, 1996

- LDEQ and START collected 60 bulk and 30 soil samples from residential and commercial locations in the westbank area. Results revealed no asbestos fibers in the black, asphaltic shingle-like material. Asbestos fibers including chrysotile, crocidolite, and amosite were detected in bulk samples collected from the light, bluish-grey, cementitious-like material and from all soil samples collected in drainage pathways and areas around the ACM

May 1996

- by the end of May 1996, 613 sites were located; however, 32 of those site were the asphaltic material; therefore, approximately 581 sites have been confirmed

July 1996

- EPA, START, US Corp of Engineers, and IT Corp. held a meeting and site recon to plan strategies for the proposed removal action

- EPA is currently working on finalizing funding for the project

- Phase I removal activities would involve ACM locations around schools and day cares which is currently estimated as 19 schools - 79 ACM locations and 4 day cares - 11 ACM locations

WESTBANK ASBESTOS

The entire Westbank Asbestos site consists of the original Johns-Mansfield Asbestos facility property, the Riverfront landfill, the LaPalco landfill, and some 600 plus residential properties. This facility is unique in that residential areas are involved in such great numbers. The residential contamination is derived from the asbestos-containing "fill" material that was obtained from the operational facility's waste products. From the 1940's through mid-1960's this material was sold for a few dollars per dumptruck load as driveway and backfill material.

EPA-Emergency Response Section is currently planning a Removal Action directed solely at these residential properties which includes a number of schools and daycare facilities. Their analysis of the situation is that there is an "imminent danger" due to the degradation and friability of the material. The Removal Action is not directed towards the industrial or commercial properties; that would be addressed by the Remedial Branch of EPA.

The asbestos-containing "fill" material in these residential properties has degraded to a very friable state: fibers can be directly released. The asbestos fiber bundles in the material can be lifted out of the cement matrix using only hand pressure. (You can pick them out with your fingernail.) Analyses have shown the main types of asbestos present are chrysotile and crocidolite. It is very important to note that crocidolite is by far the most hazardous and carcinogenic type of asbestos. It also has a tensile strength of 400 times that of stainless steel, and can easily penetrate human bone. After inhalation or ingestion, this material does not degrade.

The residential areas being looked at in the first phase of this removal action will be those located on and near-by schools and daycare facilities. Striking examples of the human impact are:

* a daycare center with this material as base for a swing set where children have worn holes in the material; and

* a school yard where a leaf blower is used to keep the asbestos pad "clean", dispersing fibers directly into the breathing zone of the children.

In both these cases, we have requested the owners/operators to cover these areas with a poly-sheet to stop release of fibers that are a direct impact upon the children.

Some 90 locations will be addressed in Phase One of this Removal Action. Other residential areas are to be addressed in the Phase Two. This will include such situations as the residence in which the entire front, side, and back yard; as well as under the house, are completely covered with this asbestos matrix. It is anticipated that numerous additional residential locations will be discovered during this second phase. This is because the Site Survey Team had no direct access to contamination unless the residents were at home, or the suspect material was streetside. Access will be obtained from the property owners before further action occurs.

This site is an extremely unusual case of an estimated 600-900 locations being defined as one "site". The direct public impact is also not our typical situation for an "abandoned" site. Public information meetings are currently planned for August, with Phase One projected to begin in September.

The last monetary projection shows between $4-5 million will be needed for completion of the entire project. The funding path now being proposed by EPA would require a 10% State match of funds. The EPA has verified that the matching funds received from the state would include credit for all previous and current state, city, and local in-kind services and expenditures. This will

include all services and expenditures since "site discovery phase" in 1988 through completion of all of the Removal Action. This includes credit for such services as the following: technical/support staff use, previous sample analyses, parish Geo-mapping, waiver of disposal and handling fees, use of city-parish capitol outlay for replacement costs on sidewalks/driveways in servitudes, site security and barricade use, office use and space, field and street equipment use and space, etc.

The summary of the EPA site activities that have occurred since December, 1995 to the current time is attached.

If you have any question, or would like more information, please contact Debra Bendily of the Inactive and Abandoned Sites Division.